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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE: THE CHALLENGE OF IMPLEMENTING LIVE-FIRE RANGES IN THE
MARIANA ISLANDS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: THE CHALLENGE OF IMPLEMENTING LIVE-FIRE RANGES IN THE MARIANA ISLANDS

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Thesis: In order for the US Pacific Command (PACOM) to gain any meaningful progress in establishing a high impact live-fire range in the Mariana Islands, the United States Department of Defense must refine the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Joint Military Training (CJMT) proposal and demonstrate viable solutions that will enable local economic growth for Tinian and the CNMI.

Discussion: America's newfound pivot point in the Western Pacific has dragged the Marianas' fate for nearly three decades following World War II; and understandably, local sentiment would describe America's outlook on the indigenous future as an afterthought. It has been a period of uncertainty for the Marianas people, but for certain, America's East-West corridor is noticeably becoming Asia's entry into America's west flank. A shift in US East Asia policy has resulted in rebalancing Pacific Forces. In order to support its strategic policy changes, the US military requires a Unit-level, Joint, and Combined military training space to accommodate large scale maneuvering and live-fire exercises. Folding into the current Mariana Islands Range Complex, the CJMT proposal seeks to address PACOM's military training deficiencies and the lack of required support infrastructural enablers. The CJMT proposal presents alternative infrastructure plans for the CNMI islands of Tinian and Pagan that are capable of providing the US and its partners integrated military training and realistic sea, air, and land effects. For the CNMI, this equates to economic growth where it has been the cornerstone of its people. For the residents of Tinian, the CJMT initiative signals answers to a long-awaited anticipation for infrastructure development on its US military leased lands. After four decades of minimal military activity since the CNMI joined in political union with the US, public sentiment against the CJMT continues to grow, primarily from the live-fire components in the proposal being deemed counterproductive to the local but transnational economy. As such, in the current social and economic climate, the CJMT proposal will not gain political traction and public support; and outside of eminent domain, the entire proposal will not materialize.

Conclusion: The Marianas hinging on conflicting interests must now reassess its economic momentum against America's shifting strategic policies versus Asia's contribution to the local economy. The US Pacific rebalancing supports a much larger American global strategic narrative, and the Marianas must once again adapt to shifting US policy. There is potential for economic growth in the CNMI under the CJMT proposal. Despite that Asia is the main economic driver in this scenario, and despite CJMT's intimidating live-fire proposal or potentially adverse effects to the local economy, these two opposing positions at least in concept, do present economic opportunities if stakeholders can design a framework in which US strategic aims and local economic growth can coexist. As US Pacific policy may constantly morph based on the looming threats in Asia, the Marianas people must, either now or later, seek workable solutions because as it has always been, American policy in Micronesia is strategic. America is staying for good.

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Introduction

The Mariana Islands archipelago is of strategic importance for the US due to its location in the Western Pacific region of Micronesia, sitting aside the trans-Pacific lines of communication. The crescent shaped island chain is a natural buffer that provides a defense-in-depth layout against those who might challenge America's role in the Western Pacific. The Mariana Islands has remained subordinate to foreign powers for over 400 years. The Marianas and its Micronesian island neighbors have shared a commodity that has been leveraged for extending foreign influence that bears none of their own. The shared commodity in Micronesia is location, and no other chain of islands has offered a more perfect location than the Marianas. World super powers have come and gone since the 1500s which has caused indigenous futures to change dramatically. For island nations in Micronesia, “the Spanish came for God, the Germans came for Glory, the Japanese came for Gold, [and] the Americans came for Good.”¹ For or better or for worst, the people of the Marianas still remain tenants in their own land, boxed inside their own ecosystem, and tucked under a strategic American narrative. As long as the US’s current national interests extend to Asia, the Marianas will remain a strategic pivot point where East meets West.

Given its unique position in the Pacific, the US Department of Defense has proposed the construction of a military training complex in the Mariana Islands that would accommodate the integration of Joint and Combined military forces. The training complex requires a high impact area for the live fire of large naval surface, ground, and aviation delivered ordnance. The current CNMI Joint Military Training (CJMT) proposal does call for a high impact area but will not come to fruition outside of eminent domain. In order for the US Pacific Command (PACOM) to gain any meaningful progress in establishing a high impact live-fire range in the Marianas, the

US Department of Defense must refine the CJMT proposal and demonstrate viable solutions that will enable local economic growth for Tinian and the CNMI.

This paper will trace the history of the CNMI and its relations with the US post World War II. The paper will further shed light on the CNMI's motive to break off from the Congress of Micronesia under the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The CNMI's desire to seek separate negotiations with the US ultimately set forth binding agreements that resulted in current grievances and sentiments shared in the Marianas community. This paper will lead to understanding the sentiment of the people of Tinian towards the High Hazard Impact Live-Fire range section of the CJMT proposal. The majority of the Tinian residents during political status negotiations in the 1970s agreed to the lease of two-thirds of Tinian's land in exchange for the promise of economic growth. However, the current plan for a military live impact range on Tinian and an additional impact area on the island of Pagan, which was not included during the initial political status negotiations, has stirred a "not in my backyard" sentiment across the CNMI. In order for the CJMT to remain relevant in the local economic and political dialogue, the proposal must first focus on building infrastructure on military leased lands and defer live-fire range discussions until such time when military activities have normalized.

History and Strategic Context of the Northern Mariana Islands

The importance of Mariana Islands was recognized as early as the Seventeenth Century, when Spain stumbled onto the islands and made them a stopping point along their highly lucrative Manila Galleon route between Mexico and the Philippines. The Germans purchased the islands in the late nineteenth century from Spain and introduced a viable economy that included native contribution and ownership for the primary export of copra and beef. After the German Administration, the Empire of Japan in the early twentieth century sought a different

purpose. The Japanese took over the Northern Marianas from the Germans without bloodshed during World War I, securing an economic opportunity and a strategic military posture in the Pacific.² Approaching the inevitable war against the US, Japan prepared its defenses throughout the Pacific and the Marianas played a strategic role for both powers. Outproducing Japan in supporting its war efforts and overwhelming the empire with strategic bombing and integrated fire power and maneuver in the Pacific, the US secured victory in World War II. All Japanese island possessions would fall under the control of the victor and the US would secure a strategic pivot point.

Following the Second World War, “there [was] nothing mysterious about American motives;” and United States’ foreign policy and interest in the Northern Marianas going into the 1960s “has been entirely strategic – and it intends to keep the islands.”³ In the midst of a global industrial momentum and the competing ideologies of the West and communism for the next two decades following the war, the Mariana Islands along with other island nations in Micronesia served as a strategic platform for the US to contain the Soviet Union and China. “Although the principle of self-determination was embedded in the 1945 Charter of the United Nations, the realities of turning former colonies into self-governing entities soon transformed the ‘principle’ into a ‘right’ that was vigorously pursued for cold war and other political purposes.”⁴ In the case of the Marianas and its neighboring Micronesian nations, the US grouped all island nations for ease of administering under a single trusteeship.

In 1947, the United Nations (UN) declared the Micronesian islands, previously controlled by Japan and Germany, a UN Trusteeship which formalized the islands as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), see Figure 1. Under a UN Trusteeship Agreement, the US will act as Trustee pursuant to the UN Security Council Resolution 21 which highlights various binding

articles under a Trusteeship of Strategic Areas. The main driver for the US were security concerns, “but [was] also obligated...to foster the social and economic development of the Micronesian peoples and to prepare them for self-government or independence.”⁵ Articles under a strategic context declared several provisions that seemingly provided the administering authority (and no other UN Member) the full control and authority to leverage TTPI’s strategic geographic positioning to include the building up of military installations, employing of military forces, and “conducting of experiments related to fission on Eniwetok Atoll” in the Marshall Islands.⁶ As the administering authority the US had “no concealed motives because...these islands [were] for one purpose only and [that] is national security. Economically they will be a liability, socially they will present problems, and politically... [the United States] ...will have to work out a policy of administration.”⁷

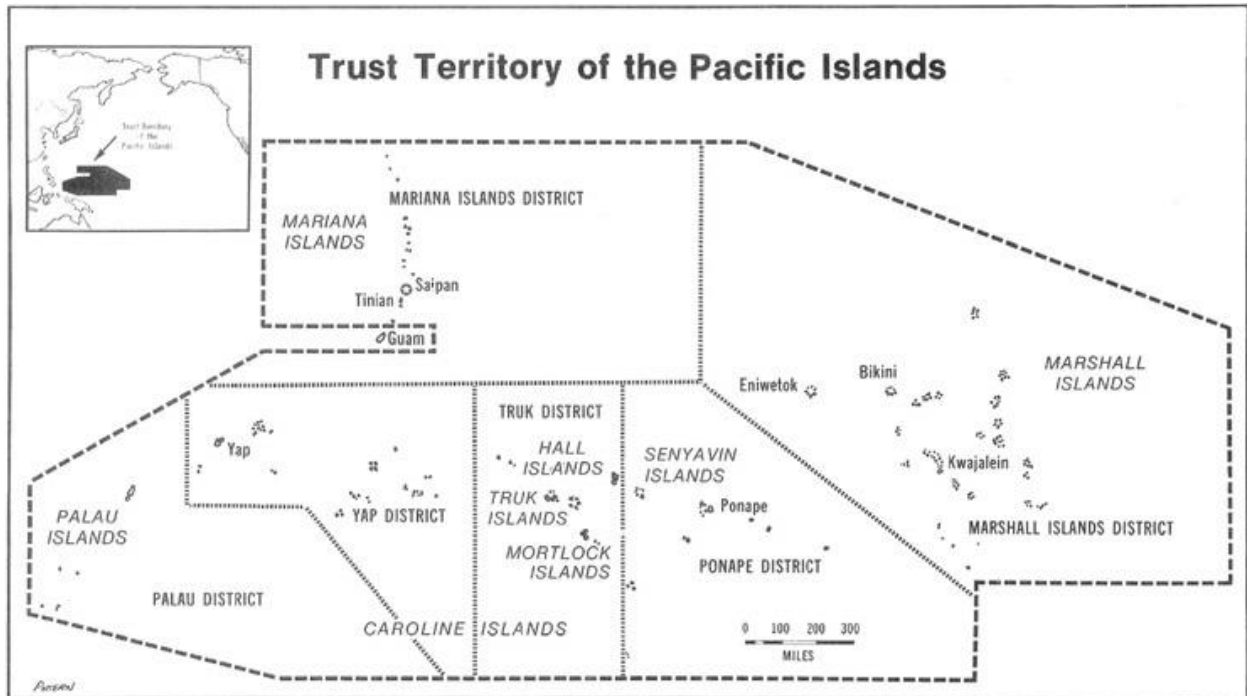


Figure 1: Map of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands⁸

The initial formation of TTPI came with contested proposals among US Government (USG) agencies on whether the islands would fall under military or civilian control. The bureaucratic process to find any cohesive approach was further stymied by opposing agency views within the executive branch and clashing personalities of flag officers in the Defense Department. Competing views wrestled with finding the balance between ways to employ TTPI's strategic location due to shifting US policy towards Asia and fulfilling the trusteeship agreement "to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the Trust Territories."⁹ Whether under military or civilian control, US policy in TTPI would shift from Truman's more strategic stance, President Kennedy's "continuing tide of self-determination," to President Johnson's Vietnam War.¹⁰ Herein lies the beginnings of an "era of benign neglect in Micronesia."¹¹ As the fate of Micronesia hangs on the balance between US strategic policies (strategic interests tipping the scales more so over liberal interests) and advocates for a more humanitarian based format, the administering of the islands "was little more than a caretaker operation, and plans for the future were nonexistent or vague at best."¹² Immediately after World War II and for the next two decades under America's "policy of strategic denial," Micronesia was nothing more than a secret nuclear test bed and a Central Intelligence Agency training ground as part of an ongoing effort to counter communist China influence.¹³

American strategic interests tipped the scale in its favor to project its might from the Pacific; and thus, the "Americanization of Micronesia was launched, a development that has created massive social and economic dependency."¹⁴ The Solomon Report highlighted the US's clear intentions of molding the fate of Micronesia towards fitting in the cast of American foreign policy.¹⁵ In the 1960s under Johnson, millions of dollars were pumped into TTPI to fund

progressive programs such as education, employment, and health care which propped up the urbanization on these small island communities. Even though “American territories...were included within the framework of Johnson’s ‘Great Society,’ and during its heyday there were over one hundred sixty separate US programs operating in the trust territory...Many of the programs were inappropriate for small island communities and [proved] corrosive to Micronesian cultures and societies.”¹⁶ Island leaders pressured for more representation; and “it was evident that they had taken to heart American notions about democracy and self-determination, and they lobbied for a territory-wide legislature.”¹⁷

Forming in 1965 the Congress of Micronesia stood up as the official structure to present any grievances at the regional level for TTPI, providing a round table for representatives from the Mariana Islands, Palau, Marshal Islands, Caroline Islands, and other island nations. Although consolidated and administratively packaged under TTPI, the different attitudes, languages, and cultural patterns identified by an “anthropological project initiated by the Navy produced numerous studies elaborating on these [differences]..., but the political implications of such studies were largely overlooked.”¹⁸ Openly, the Marianas people shared a more progressive stance and collaborative view on self-determination with the Americans whereas other island cultures such the Marshalls still remained deeply rooted in tribal practices and beliefs.

The widespread commitment within the Northern Marianas to affiliation with the United States was based on a sensitivity to the colonial past and an assessment of future prospects. After three hundred years of foreign control, the Northern Marianas leaders recognized that voluntary affiliation with a major power was the only way to secure self-government and economic growth. Whatever regret there was for the loss of economic prosperity under the Japanese, the 4,200 Northern Marianas people who survived the war remembered vividly

the autocratic governing style and stern limits on education that the Japanese had enforced. They had seen first hand the military power that the United States mounted during the war and the prosperity and wealth of its people during the following years.¹⁹

The Marianas' strong proponent for seeking to split from the Congress of Micronesia and the potential fragmentation of Micronesia was "always on the verge of flying apart."²⁰ Under the trusteeship, the island nations differed in cultural mindsets and the Northern Mariana Islands was the only nation more than willing to seek a political union with the US. The people of the Northern Marianas "have long aspired for a close and permanent affiliation with the United States of America."²¹ The other Micronesian groups favored a more conservative outlook and leaned on their traditions to keep them bonded and thus to remain freely associated with the US. Cultural differences among the Micronesian island districts in the Trust Territory were the main driver for the Northern Marianas to chart its own separate course. Overwhelmingly determined and committed for change, Northern Marianas declared that they "will secede from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands by force of arms if necessary, and with or without the approval of the United Nations."²²

In the early 1970s, the Nixon Administration made drastic changes to its policy in Southeast Asia as a result of looming pressure during the Vietnam War and from Japan petitioning for the return of Okinawa. Additionally, "the continued Russian presence in the Pacific caused the United States military to place a high value on denying Russians any base in Micronesia."²³ The US returned control of Okinawa to Japan in 1972 which increased the interest for a military base in Micronesia. During this time, "for a number of reasons, the islands of Micronesia [were] absolutely vital to the long range security of the United States [as] they extend the potential range of the U.S. sea and air power by thousands of miles, yet are not close

enough to the continent of Asia to be militarily vulnerable or politically provocative.”²⁴ To support Nixon’s new policy, Franklin Williams became the Presidents’ direct representative to explore the Northern Marianas’ political status aspirations in exchange for support of US strategic repositioning.²⁵

The Northern Marianas Negotiates for a Better Deal

With American foreign policy recalibrating its focus in Vietnam, the status of the TTPI and its island districts start to pull in varying directions. Although dealing with one Micronesia was cheaper and administratively much easier for the US, separate talks with the Northern Marianas was approved due to the islands strategic benefits. At this point, it was only the Northern Marianas that was seeking separate talks from the Congress of Micronesia. The people of the Northern Marianas “seem never to have shared the rising Micronesian nationalism.”²⁶ As representative Williams expressed during rounds of negotiations with Micronesia that “it does not seem that the American policy of seeking a common solution for the entire [Micronesia] Territory is any longer feasible or desirable” for the Marianas and that pressing forward “against the expressed will of the people of the Marianas, would deny them their right of self-determination and impose upon them a future political status which they have said is unacceptable.”²⁷ A US approval for separate negotiations with the Marianas begin to fragment the TTPI. Many share the sentiment of American betrayal and the tactic of “dividing and conquering” Micronesia was merely the path of least political resistance.²⁸ Essentially, any further talks to force all the island chains to be a single Micronesian voice would only slow down US strategic objectives. Ultimately, the Northern Marianas exploited an opportunity to self-determine in the direction of the US while under its umbrella of protection for economic gain.

The only logical path after accounting for the “limited human and natural resources, the Northern Marianas leaders advocated what they thought were realistic political goals.”²⁹

As a result of irreconcilable cultural differences and opposing political directions amongst the Micronesian nations, the people of the Northern Marianas longed for a different course that was driven by economic aspirations and a separate political status with the US. While under the TTPI, the Northern Marianas has come to recognize that its economy will not grow. As the people of the Northern Marianas navigated “‘aggressively to find ways’ to have their own separate negotiations with the United States,”³⁰ three options for the Northern Marianas’ status included free association, falling in with Guam, and a commonwealth structure. Although US citizenship was on the table if aligned with Guam, the vast majority of the Northern Marianas people wanted commonwealth status with the US rather than falling in with Guam. The commonwealth setup would enable the Marianas more control over such matters as economic endeavors, minimum wage laws, and land ownership regulations. Additionally, even though Chamorros on Guam and the Northern Marianas shared familial ties, neither ultimately wanted to unite. In fact, Guam voted “no” to the reunification with the Northern Marianas.³¹ However, now more than ever “the Marianas people ‘have long aspired for a close and permanent affiliation with the United States of America’.”³²

On the opening day of for the Marianas political status discourse on December 13, 1972, a bishop broke the silence with the invocation: “Watch over us during these days that we may be open in our deliberations, prudent in our expressions of what we are seeking not only for ourselves but for those who will in the future be the heirs of what we now seek.”³³ The common theme during through negotiations were liberal principles of self-determination, democracy, and free trade. Ironically a taste for the modern world and the continued pursuit of it was a model

that the US introduced to Micronesia.³⁴ The sad truth is “no master plan for American development appeared because the [US] expansion was not done for Micronesia’s long-range benefit; it was done for America’s short-range benefit.”³⁵ The Northern Marianas had clear intentions and Tinian was their main bargaining chip; the US was happy to work out a deal.

The Northern Marianas “wanted to be economically self-sufficient.”³⁶ However in order to facilitate economic growth, the Marianas wanted control of core government mechanisms such as immigration, tax implementation, labor, and land ownership. Additionally, requests to continue US Federal grants and aid programs would enable the new Marianas government to provide basic services to its people. To drive economic growth, the Marianas delegation expressed its openness for foreign investment.³⁷ Even as a freshman negotiating body on the part of the Northern Marianas, they were able to “shape a realistic plan that would elevate them out of third-world status—and to do so within a time frame that was politically acceptable to their increasingly well-educated and ambitious constituents.”³⁸

American’s changing strategic policy towards Asia and its military aims in the Marianas called for the use of land to facilitate future military pursuits. Tinian’s role in World War II provided the US with a launching platform to enable the strategic bombing of Japan, eventually causing it to capitulate. Through negotiations with the Marianas Political Status Commission, both the Marianas and the USG recognized a win-win situation and the political landscape was receptive to continuing Tinian’s strategic importance in East Asia. For the military, Tinian’s topography provided an incredible opportunity for a training environment in the west Pacific, but still far enough from communist China, to integrate sea, land, and air mission sets. Furthermore, a military complex would allow a hub for the staging and posturing of military assets. Tinian would position as a pivot point of strategic influence for America.

America's immediate interest in Tinian opened a window for economic opportunities for its residents. For the leaders of Saipan and Rota in the political status commission, Tinian, too, was its pivot to securing a political union with the Americans. A military land lease agreement was drafted and served as the key ingredient needed to complete the Covenant that would define the political union of commonwealth status of the Northern Marianas under the US. Tinian's land lease advertised economic development by way of new construction of a military base and associated support installations. This meant a revenue stream infused into the local economy. Williams "disclosed that the military planned to build a \$300 million multiservice" military facilities to support some "5,000 to 6,000" permanent personnel "with another 7,000 arriving periodically for training," which undoubtedly "implied great economic opportunity."³⁹ To sway local support, Marines conducted an amphibious landing on Tinian that was also accompanied by a "sudden infusion of cash into the island economy, and a promise of more to come, the majority of Tinian residents decided to accept the military land lease deal."⁴⁰ Through majority vote of the Tinian people, two-thirds of its land were made available for military purposes. The Covenant was voted into law by nearly eighty percent through a plebiscite in 1975 and was subsequently passed by the US Congress in February 1976.⁴¹ As the new Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) became effective on January 9, 1978, the CNMI celebrated as US's newest Americans.

Tinian's Decades of Anticipation

The newly formed CNMI was a monumental success of self-determination for a small island nation. A successful outcome for more local control of political destiny came with sacrifice by the CNMI island of Tinian. There has been minimal to zero military development since Tinian has sacrificed its real estate for the economic and political ventures of the entire

Northern Marianas and the strategic aims of the US. Presently strong points of contention are strengthening over Tinian's military leased lands.

Meanwhile as Tinian waited for military development on its leased lands, the CNMI's tourism industry exploded, with Saipan benefiting handsomely in the 1980s and 1990s. Japanese tourists made up to seventy percent of the arrivals into the CNMI and "an estimated \$750 million to \$1 billion in foreign investment, mostly from Japan, flowed into the flourishing Marianas tourism industry..., notwithstanding the very considerable uncertainties engendered by litigation regarding the commonwealth's land alienation restrictions."⁴² After twenty years under the Covenant, the CNMI's "local government revenues increased 4,800 percent—from \$5 million in 1978 to \$248 million in 1997."⁴³ The economic boom of the CNMI remained mostly on Saipan while Tinian and Rota relied on district government jobs.

In the late 1980s, Tinian voted into law an initiative to allow for five major casino projects in hopes to lure foreign investments. In 1998, Tinian's first major casino owned and operated by Chinese investors opened. It was no secret that Saipan had a monopoly on the economic revenue stream which "bolstered the long-standing conviction in Tinian and Rota that they were not sharing in the benefits of their new commonwealth status."⁴⁴ As CNMI's bargaining chip for commonwealth status, Tinian's already fledgling economy further dwindled when its first casino shutdown in 2015 due to litigations, fines, and inadequate ports of entry to facilitate more tourists. Today, Tinian still waits for the development of its leased lands.

A US and Japan agreement to move Marines to Guam from Okinawa and President Obama's Rebalance to the Pacific policy revived plans to develop Tinian. Underlying the rebalance "is the Administration's belief that the center of gravity for U.S. foreign policy, national security, and economic interests is shifting towards Asia."⁴⁵ Part of the rebalance is

moving Marines to Guam which will require major infrastructure development and moreover a place to train. In the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, the US set a course to develop a military training complex in the Western Pacific that would accommodate unit-level, Joint, and Combined forces.⁴⁶ US PACOM concluded that its Pacific forces faced readiness training and support facility deficiencies. This will require vacant land and beachheads for training; and the Marianas stands as most suitable due to its proximity to Guam and the preexisting Tinian Lease Agreement.⁴⁷ The rebalance in the Pacific calls for increased partnerships and cooperation with Asian nations. The Marianas is situated perfectly for Joint or Combined military integration training; and a training complex on US soil in the western Pacific would enable Combined forces proficiency training. The only other live fire, realistic, and flexible training complex outside the continental US on American soil is the Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA) and Makua Military Reservation (MMR) in Hawaii. Unlike the PTA and MMR, the CJMT would afford the US a premier live fire and realistic training complex in a location that is logistically less challenging and diplomatically and politically more convenient.

A sign of potential economic benefits from the CJMT proposal has stirred local anticipation for a long-awaited boost in the economy. However, after four decades of anticipation, public sentiment against the CJMT continues to grow due to certain components in the proposal being deemed counterproductive to the local but transnational CNMI economy. Although the CJMT presents potential infrastructure development on Tinian's leased lands, the major points of contention are centered on the proposal for the use of live artillery sized munitions on Tinian. Additionally, Pagan, a volcanic island to the north, is proposed for the use of much larger munitions.

The current sentiment towards the CJMT proposal stems from an American promise in the 1970s to develop the lease lands by building a multimillion dollar facility to accommodate permanent military personnel. The people of Tinian never envisioned high impact areas destructing their key point. Moreover, after decades of waiting for development, now a plan is proposed that is perceived to be asking too much, and too late, at a time when the dominant economic revenue generator for the CNMI is the tourism industry. Perceived as literally destructive to Tinian and CNMI's tourism industry, the social and political climate is not ready for a drastic change in the socioeconomic pattern of the island. The US military muscling its agendas into today's Pacific context is contrary to the island people's new perspectives. For the Marianas, a new generation of proactive citizens who have sought higher education has returned home with vigor and focus to improve the political and economic landscape. Now more than ever, the younger generation of the CNMI have been vocal and active in civic responsibilities. There has been local support for the American strategic narrative in Pacific but the proposed infrastructural enablers have continued to receive opposition.

A Way Forward: Infrastructure First, Live-Fire Later

The Mariana Islands currently plays a strategic role by providing PACOM sea, undersea, airspace, and land maneuver space for military activities and training under the current Mariana Islands Range Complex (MIRC), see Figure 1. The MIRC encompasses nearly 502,000 square nautical miles of ocean, 71,000 square nautical miles of airspace, and 64 square nautical miles of land. Presently, only the CNMI island of Farallon De Medinilla offers a live impact area for bombs, naval surface fires, and air delivered ordnance.⁴⁸

Folding into the MIRC, the CJMT proposes three alternative plans for Tinian and two for Pagan. In Figure 2, the three alternatives for Tinian primarily vary in size of the ground

maneuver areas for personnel and vehicles and number of training options. The High Hazard Impact Area remains in all three alternatives. In Figure 3, the CJMT proposes two alternatives for Pagan primarily varying in size of the High Hazard Impact Area which affects the size of ground maneuver space and the number of live-fire training options available. Although no other type of training can replace a combined and integrated exercise by incorporating a live-fire and maneuver training layer, the CJMT faces an uphill battle in the CNMI's social and political terrain.

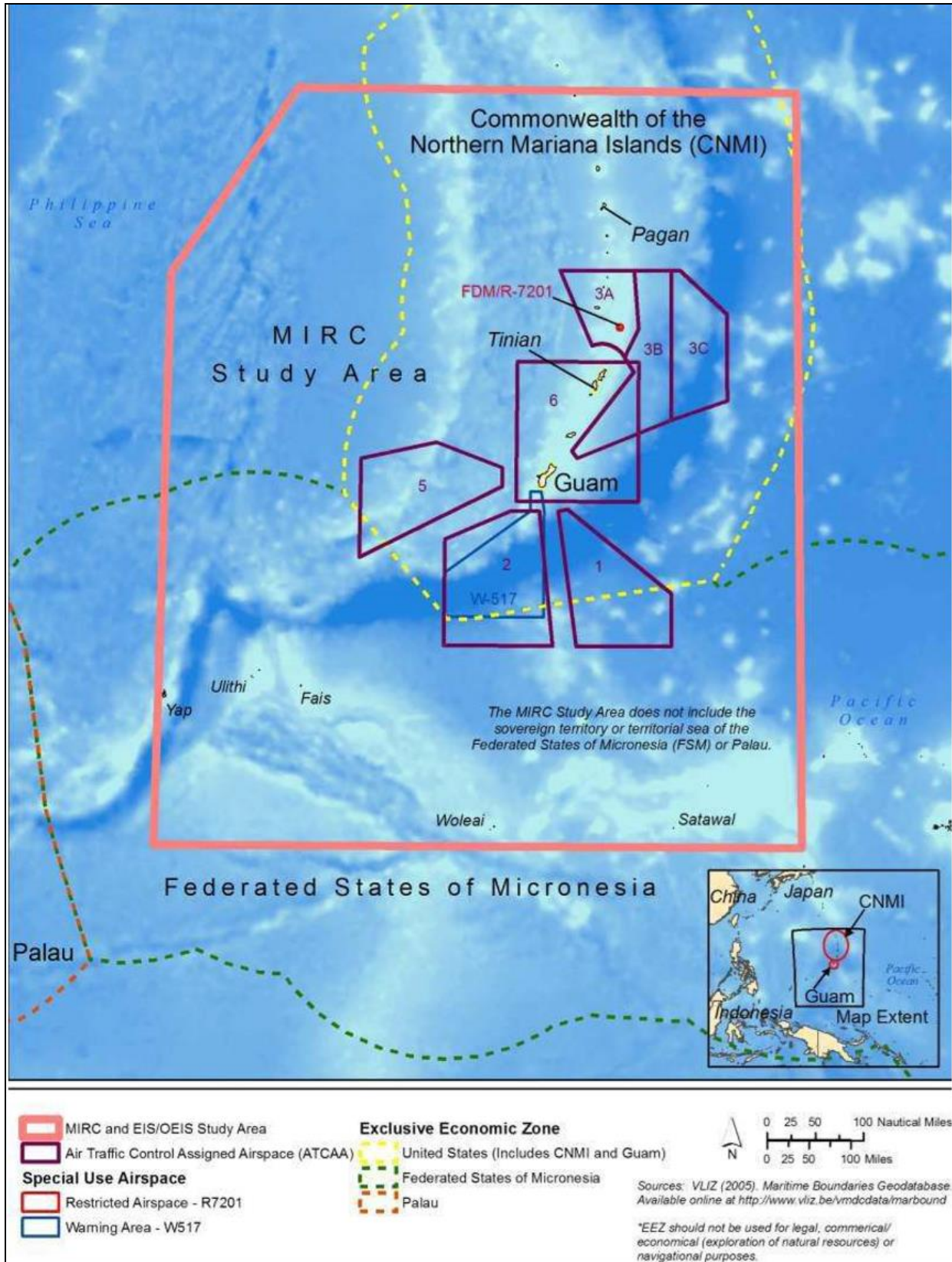


Figure 2: Mariana Islands Range Complex⁴⁹

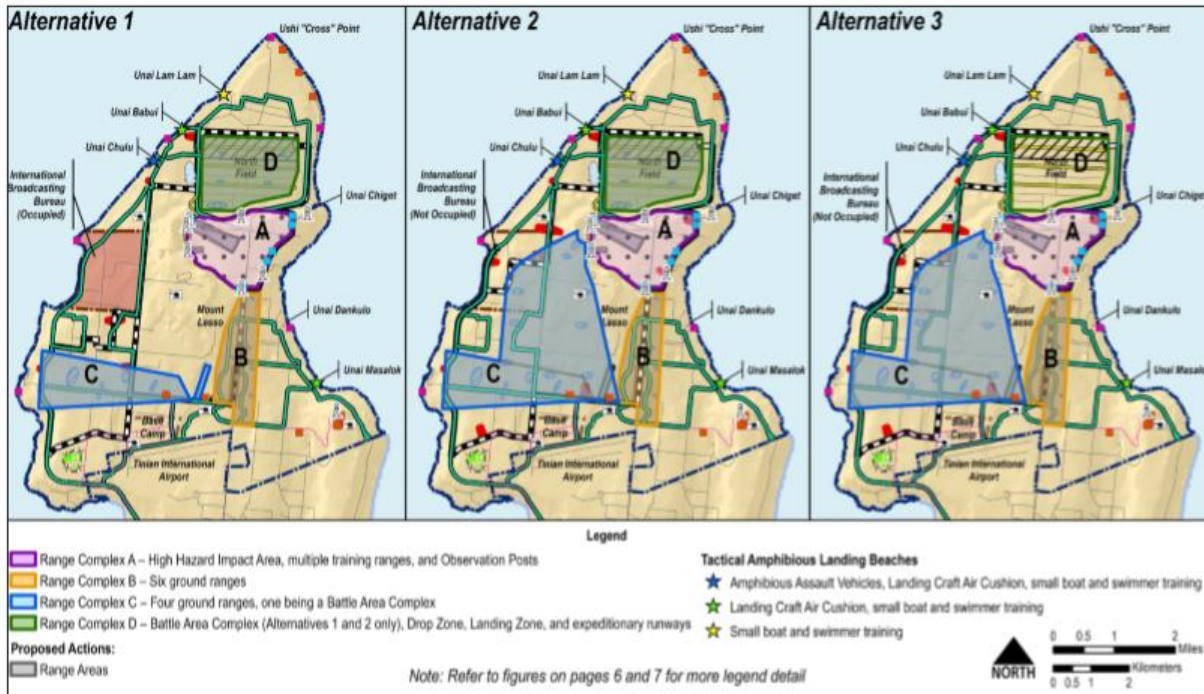
Tinian Unit Level Alternatives

All three Tinian alternatives provide the following defining features:

- High Hazard Impact Area
- Convoy Course
- Convoy Course Engagement Areas
- Tracked Vehicle Driver's Course
- Landing Zones
- Observation Posts
- Surface Radar Sites
- Tactical Amphibious Landing Beaches
- Maneuver Area (Light Forces)
- Field Artillery Indirect Fire Range
- Base Camp
- Munitions Storage Area
- Port Improvements
- Access Road Improvements, Fence Lines, and Gates
- Airport Improvements
- Utilities

ALTERNATIVES WERE REFINED TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS:

- Segmented airspace
- Moved firing positions farther from population centers
- Reduced night training



ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3
Lacks a southern Battle Area Complex.	Includes a southern Battle Area Complex.	
Includes a northern Battle Area Complex in Range Complex D.		Lacks a northern Battle Area Complex.
Six Convoy Course engagement areas	11 Convoy Course Engagement Areas	
International Broadcasting Bureau present. Some weapons range use in Range Complexes C and D.	International Broadcasting Bureau absent. Allows for full array of weapons range use in Range Complexes C and D.	International Broadcasting Bureau absent. Allows for full array of weapons range use in Range Complex C.
Surface danger zones support live-fire ranges over land and over water.	Surface danger zones larger than Alternative 1	
Simultaneous use of training assets coordinated with Range Control and training exercise planners to maximize training for participants.		
One (northern) Battle Area Complex limits training options.	Two Battle Area Complexes (North and South) provide most training options.	One (southern) Battle Area Complex limits training options.
International Broadcasting Bureau presence limits some of the firing directions that could be used in Range Complexes C and D.	International Broadcasting Bureau absence allows for full array of weapons employment in Range Complex C and D.	International Broadcasting Bureau absence allows for full array of weapons employment in Range Complex C. The southern Battle Area Complex affords more training options than the northern Battle Area Complex when compared to Alternative 1.

Figure 3: Tinian Training Alternatives⁵⁰

Pagan Combined Level Alternatives

Both Pagan alternatives provide the following defining features:

- High Hazard Impact Area
- Expeditionary Base Camp/Bivouac Area
- Tactical Amphibious Landing Beaches
- Expeditionary Airfield Improvements
- Military Training Trail Network
- South Range Complex
- North Range Complex (Landing Zones, Firing Positions, and Target Areas)
- Munitions Storage Area and Supply Route

TRAINING TEMPO

- 20 weeks per year of live-fire training on Tinian.
- 16 weeks per year of live-fire training on Pagan.

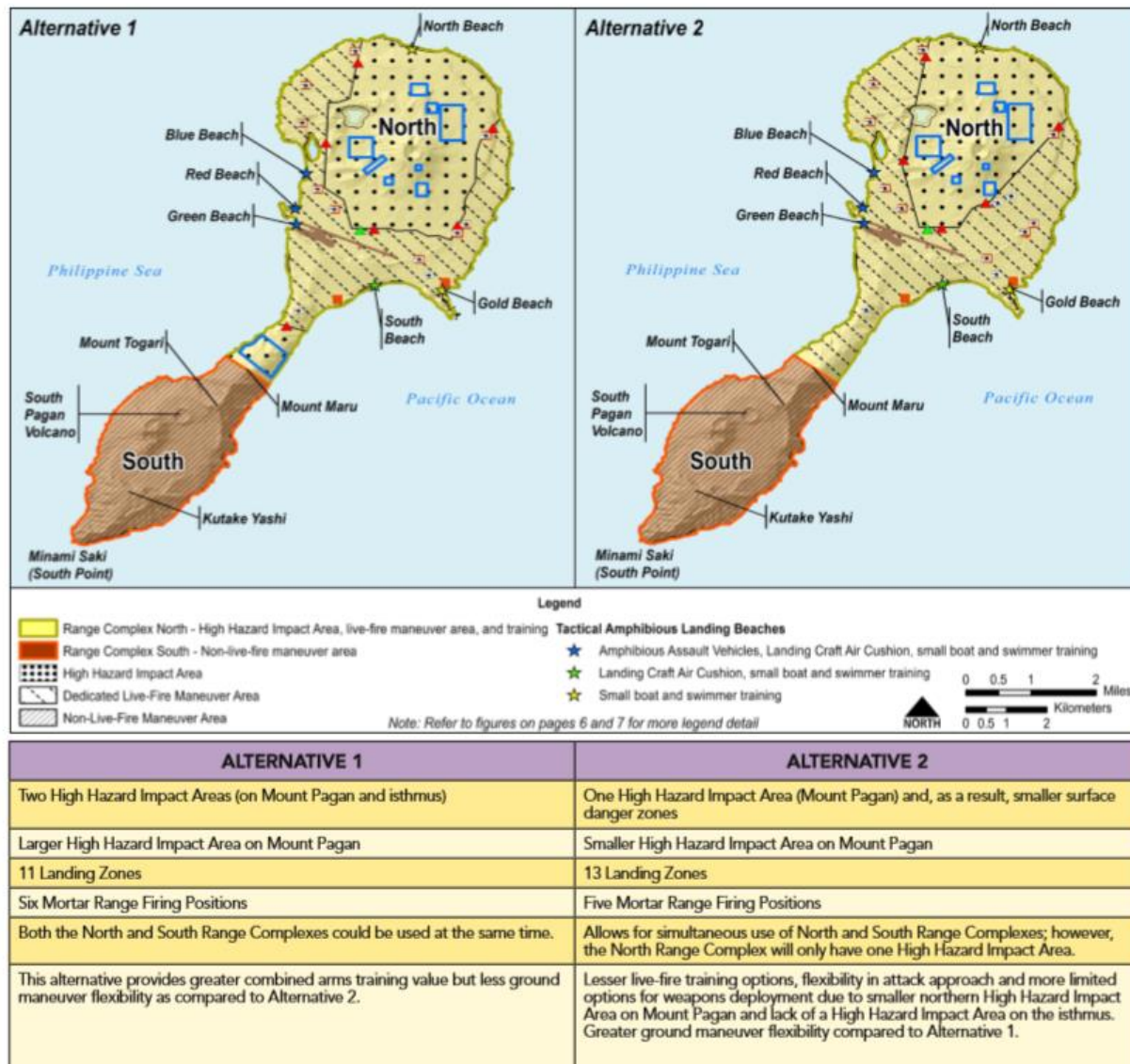


Figure 4: Pagan Training Alternatives⁵¹

The Department of Defense's efforts in the CJMT project must be refined and demonstrate viable solutions that will enable military aims to coexist with the CNMI's local sentiments and economy. The CJMT planning must consider that the Marianas has a unique historical narrative that drives its current sentiments and economy. For the CNMI's environment, the Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS) released in 2013 "applies a mainland approach to impact assessment and demonstrates a lack of understanding of island systems. Conservation and natural resource management in island systems deviate considerably" from the continental US.⁵² More importantly, the DEIS lacked a cultural framework to fully analyze CNMI's social structures. A thorough study of CNMI's social structures will lead to understanding the local belief systems, deep family connection to lands, and prioritization of the economy since achieving commonwealth status.

For example, the DEIS highlighted that the island of Pagan is uninhabited and thus disregarded any study for potential human impacts. This assertion failed to account for Pagan's frequent year-round returning residents whether for harvest or visitations for upkeep. Many Pagan residents fled the island in 1981 following a volcanic emergency declaration. Many of the Pagan residents reside in Saipan but many still hope to return home. CNMI is addressing Pagan's economic future through legislation that will implement resettlement plans and further aims for economic zoning.⁵³ Despite living in Saipan, the people of Pagan still remain connected to their homeland. The conclusion that Pagan has been abandoned by the CNMI steepens the uphill battle for CJMT. For Tinian, local protests highlight CJMT's violation of the Tinian Lease Agreement. The CJMT proposal "provides a description of numerous unavoidable significant impacts of the [various alternatives for Tinian and Pagan] that are deemed as irreversible or irretrievable...Irreversible and/or irretrievable impacts are counter to the Tinian

Lease Agreement.”⁵⁴ The Tinian Lease Agreement expresses the US’s commitment to correct any damages caused by military activities; therefore, CJMT’s proposed mitigation plans for any impacts violates the agreement.⁵⁵

Pointedly, CJMT’s alternatives for Tinian and Pagan will not pass at the local level if a High Hazard Impact Area remains in the proposal. Although not all military training deficiencies in PACOM will be addressed, at least for now, removing Live-fire impact areas will keep CJMT negotiations on the table. The CJMT proposal as a whole but more specifically the Live-fire ranges, in the eyes of CNMI’s local residence, runs contrary to what was negotiated and settled on forty plus years ago. For the people of the CNMI it has always been about economic growth; and the American narrative at the time, strategic interests in the Western Pacific overshadowed all else. Now that the CNMI has created a viable economy, the American rebalancing act in the Pacific seems to frustrate the local economic momentum. The way forward for military training activities in the Marianas is to slash the Live-Fire components out of the CJMT proposal. The CJMT is asking way too much from the locals. The social and economic landscape lacked an in-depth analysis by the USG and continuing in this approach will halt further CJMT discussions. The USG must refine the proposal to at least get a foot in the door.

Normalization of military activities in the CNMI can be achieved by starting with non-live-fire activities. Historically, the CNMI as benefited from US military activities to include engineering civic assistance, community relations projects, and medical and dental civic action programs. On occasion, Marine Expeditionary Units have responded to real world contingency operations such as humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions. A gradual military build-up where normalization of military activities must go hand in hand with CJMT.

Building infrastructure first has proven to be the right approach and presently it is the right time. The US Air Force's (USAF) Divert Airfield project calls for the expansion and improvement of the Tinian International Airport for the purpose of accommodating the overflow of Andersen Air Force Base in Guam. This divert project came near simultaneous to the proposal of the CJMT; and it is no surprise that the CNMI quickly acted on the opportunity for infrastructure development. Former Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James, commented the "initiative will provide critical strategic operational and exercise capabilities for U.S. forces and provide economic benefits to the local community."⁵⁶ The Tinian leadership lobbied for the USAF to select Tinian over Saipan for economic reasons. Currently, the Fiscal Year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act has been approved by the Senate and the Tinian Divert Airfield project is underway.⁵⁷

Conclusion

For the Marianas, America's "newest Americans have a heritage of adaptability to superior outside forces [for] over four centuries. They seem prepared to make the best of whatever the Pacific winds may bring."⁵⁸ America's newfound pivot point in the Western Pacific has dragged the Marianas' fate for nearly three decades following World War II; and understandably, local sentiment would describe America's outlook on the indigenous future as an afterthought. It has been a period of uncertainty for the Marianas people, but for certain, America's East-West corridor is noticeably becoming Asia's entry into America's west flank. The Marianas hinging on conflicting interests must now reassess its economic momentum against America's shifting strategic policies versus Asia's contribution to the local economy.

The US Pacific rebalancing supports a much larger American global strategic narrative, and the Marianas must once again adapt to shifting US policy. A piece of a much larger strategic

puzzle in the Pacific rebalance already in motion is rebasing Marines from Okinawa to Guam. The large-scale military training requirements to support the rebalance must be absorbed by the Mariana Islands archipelago. Geographically, it makes sense for the US. Guam is more prepared infrastructurally to accommodate 5,000 plus Marines and their families. As for the CNMI, the islands present less population density and therefore, although not politically ideal, are better suited to absorb the added military training requirements. Naturally, multiple points of contention will spring up just as years of protest have politically plagued the American presence in Japan. Guam is set to harness a significant economic slice of the rebalance, and stakeholders cannot blame the CNMI for pushing back against the CJMT's current live-fire and bombing range proposals.

There is potential to nest local economic growth under the CJMT proposal in the larger US Asia-Pacific narrative. Despite that Asia is the main economic driver in this scenario, and despite CJMT's intimidating live-fire proposal or potentially adverse effects to the local economy, these two opposing positions at least in concept, do present economic opportunities if stakeholders can design a framework in which US strategic aims and local economic growth can coexist. Founders of the CNMI thought logically that siding with a world super power would propel them economically; the timing is right to renegotiate and craft a new deal. As US Pacific policy may constantly morph based on the looming threats in Asia, the Marianas people must, either now or later, seek workable solutions because as it has always been, American policy in Micronesia is strategic. America is staying for good.

Endnotes

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- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 40.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
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- ²⁵ Don A. Farrell, and Bruce M. Petty. *Tinian: A Brief History*. (Honolulu, HI: Pacific Historic Parks, 2012), 93.
- ²⁶ David Nevin. *The American Touch in Micronesia*. (New York: Norton, 1977), 144.
- ²⁷ Howard P. Willens, and Deanne C. Siemer. *An Honorable Accord: The Covenant between the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States*. (Honolulu: Center for Pacific Islands Studies, School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies, University of Hawaii, 2002), 29.
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- ³⁰ Howard P. Willens, and Deanne C. Siemer. *An Honorable Accord: The Covenant between the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States*. (Honolulu: Center for Pacific Islands Studies, School of Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies, University of Hawaii, 2002), 23.
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